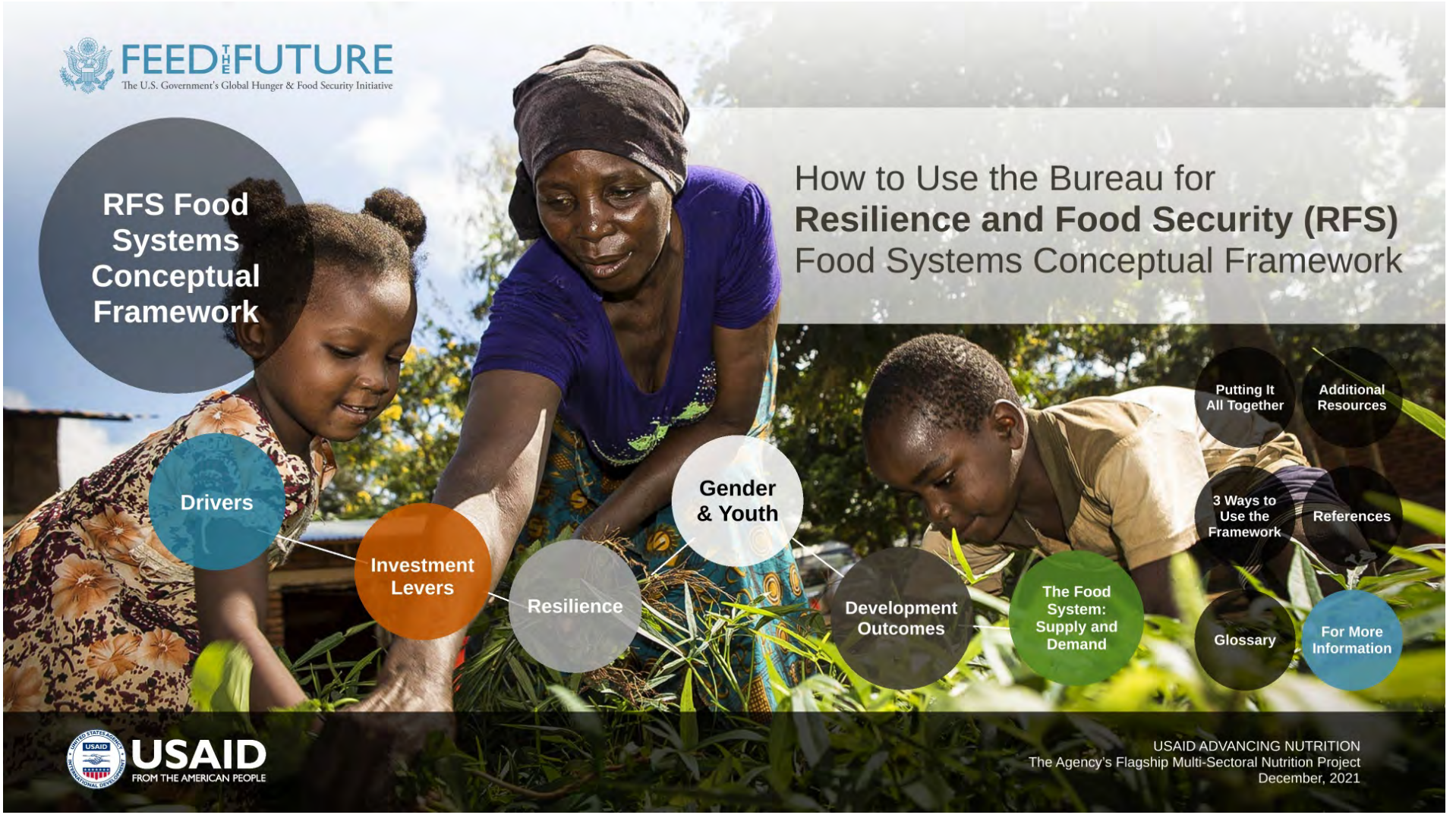
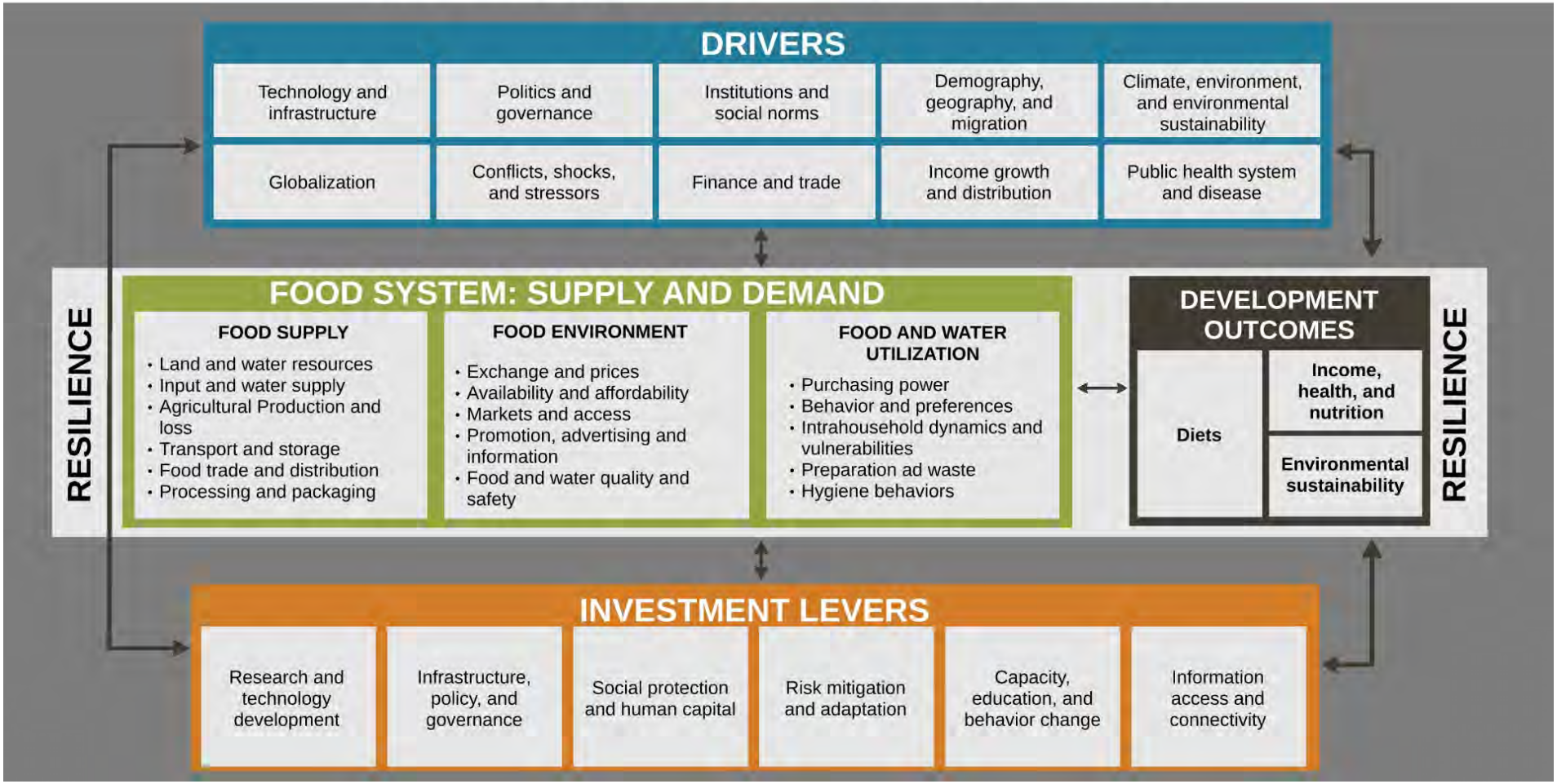
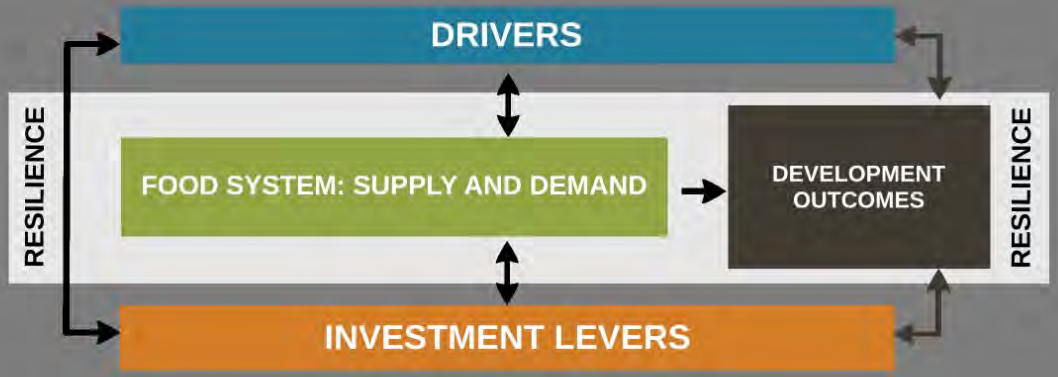

FEED THE FUTURE
The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative
RFS Food Systems Conceptual Framework
How to Use the Bureau for
Resilience and Food Security (RFS)
Food Systems Conceptual Framework
Drivers
Investment Levers
Resilience
Gender & Youth
Development Outcomes
The Food System: Supply and Demand
Putting It All Together
Additional Resources
3 Ways to Use the Framework
References
Glossary
For More Information
USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE
USAID ADVANCING NUTRITION
The Agency's Flagship Multi-Sectoral Nutrition Project
December, 2021

RFS Food Systems Conceptual Framework



What Is the RFS Food Systems Conceptual Framework?

The Framework provides **a shared food systems language**.

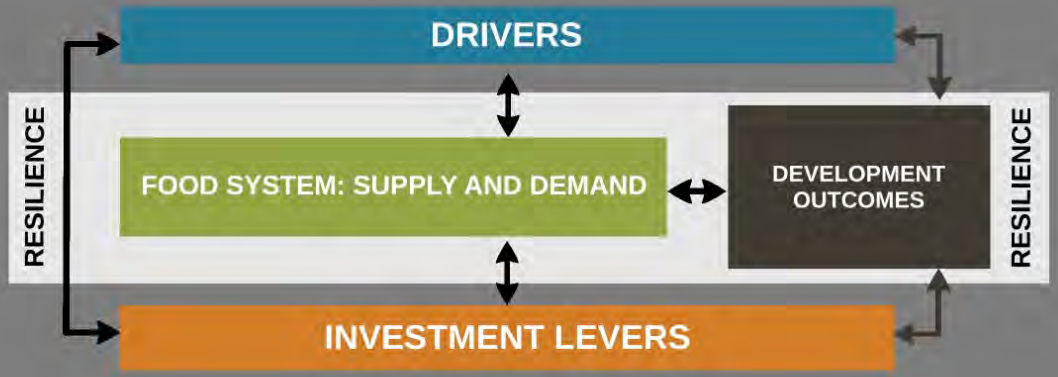


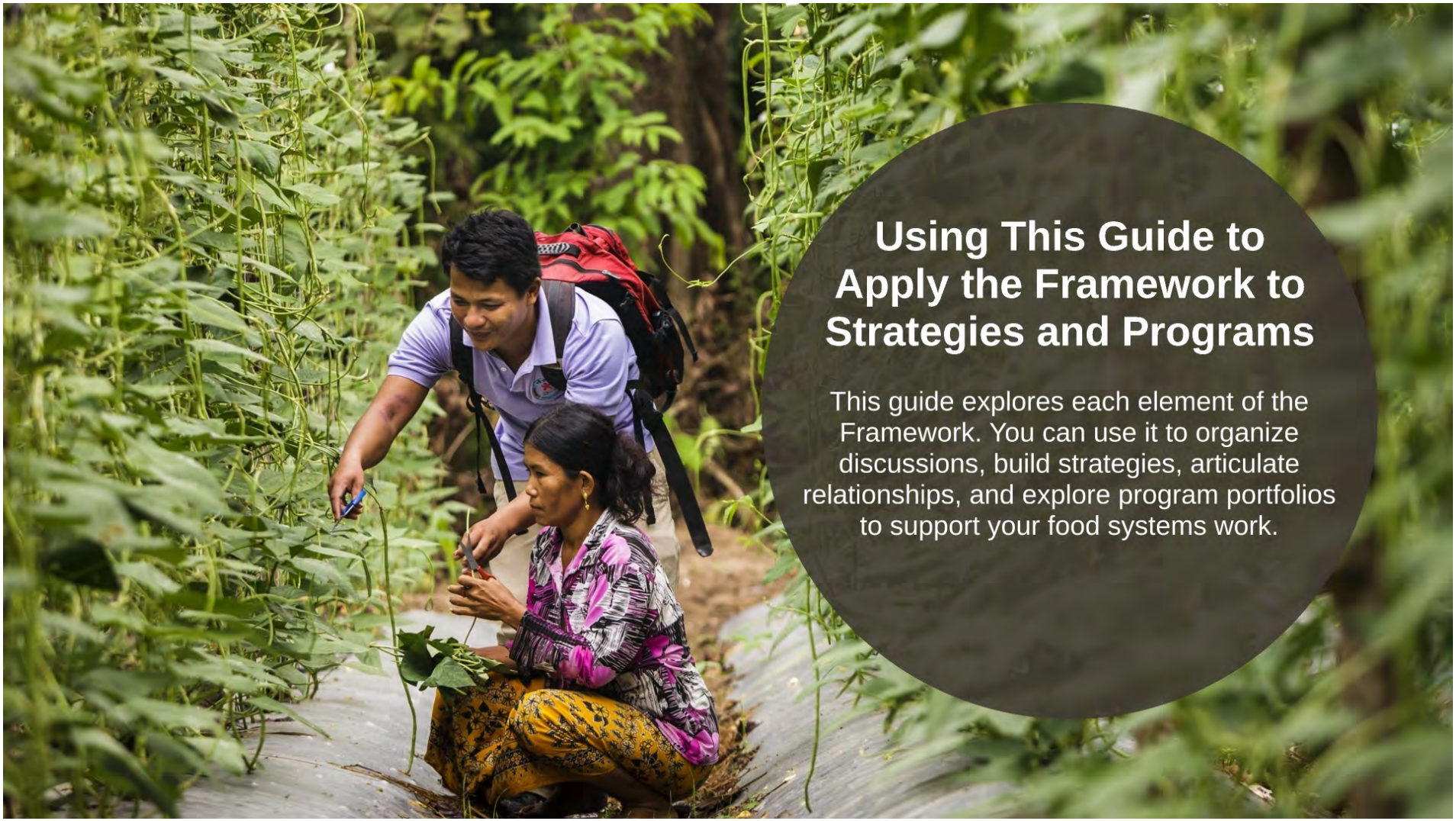
What Is the RFS Food Systems Conceptual Framework?

The arrows indicate the interrelated nature of the Framework elements, which impact each other within food systems.

What Is the RFS Food Systems Conceptual Framework?

The Framework **fosters collaboration** by showing how our disciplines are connected within food systems. Using the Framework helps us find synergies among our work.





Using This Guide to Apply the Framework to Strategies and Programs

This guide explores each element of the Framework. You can use it to organize discussions, build strategies, articulate relationships, and explore program portfolios to support your food systems work.

3 Ways to Use the Framework

Remember that the Framework and this guide can help you by—

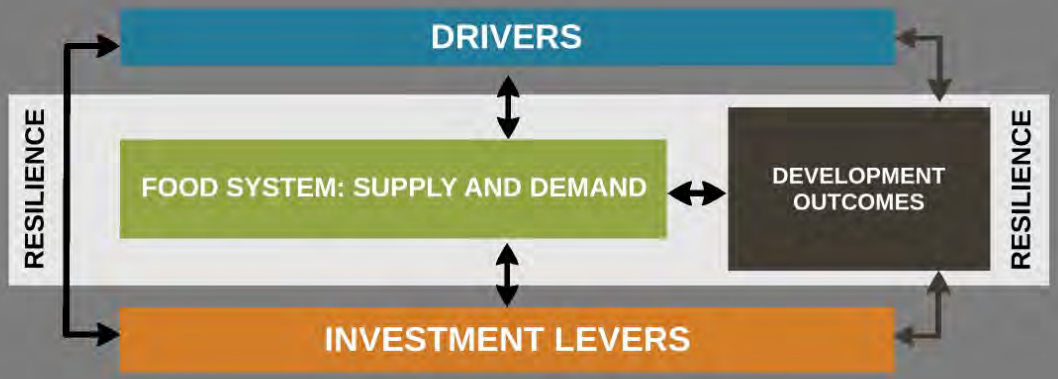
1. Sparking open conversation with colleagues for more systematic planning across USAID teams

2. Supporting activity design and helping to communicate design across teams to strengthen synergies

3. Helping you gather ideas for adaptations needed during implementation to achieve goals and objectives.

Where to Start?

Food system supply and demand - production through to consumption - is the familiar core of the Framework. The RFS Framework introduces cross-cutting elements to help us consider how the core impacts and is impacted by the larger food system.

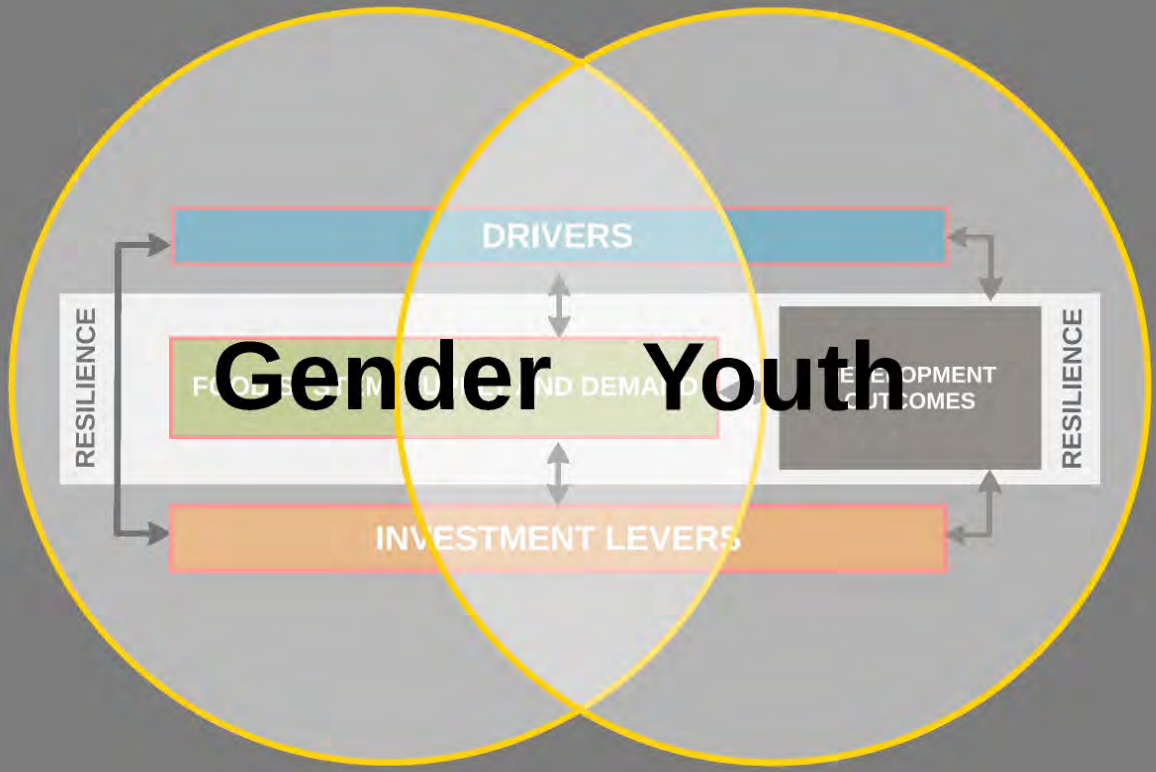


Where to Start?

Cross-Cutting Elements

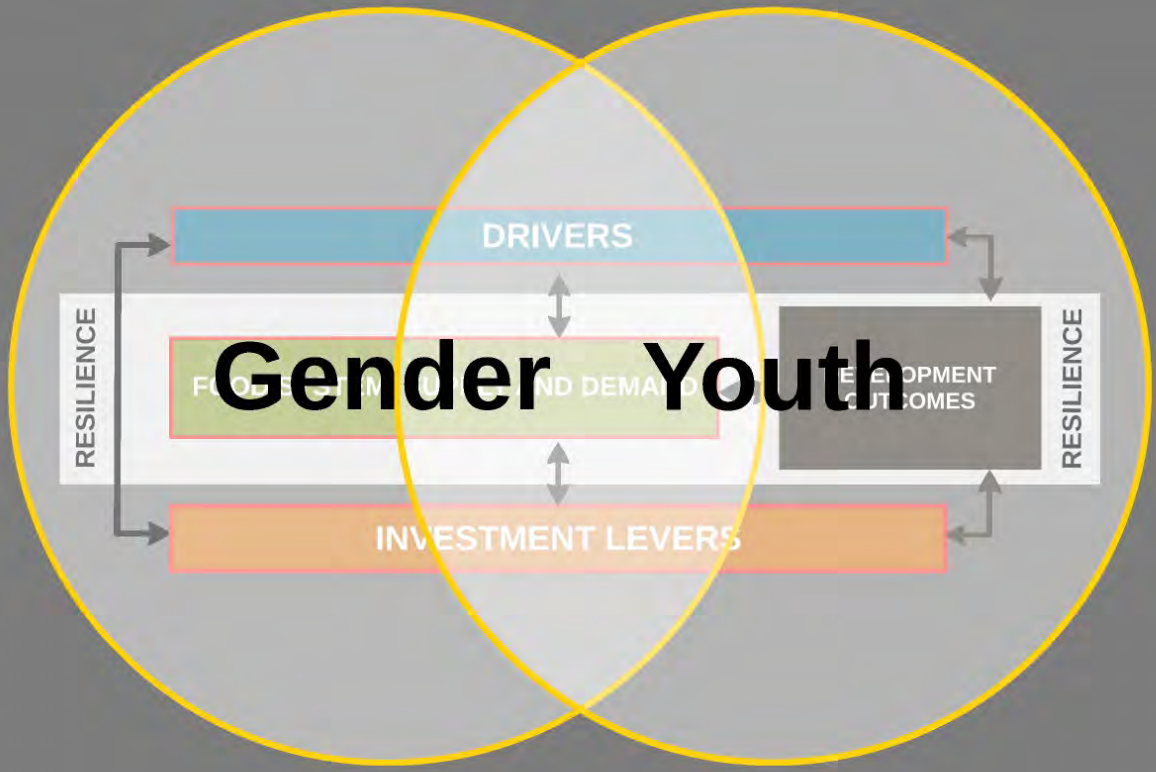
Drivers, Investment Levers, and **Resilience** influence and are influenced by the Food System.

Gender and **Youth** should be considered explicitly when applying the Framework to projects and activities.



Cross-Cutting Elements

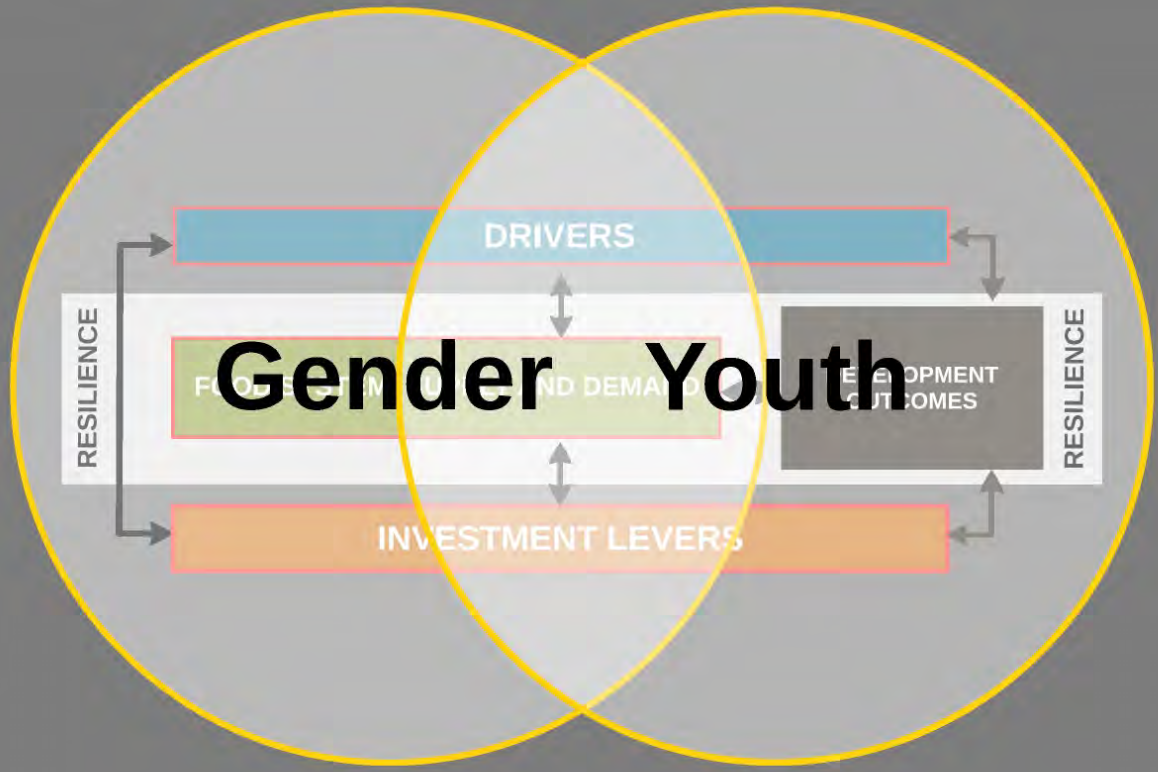
This application of the Framework shows how **Drivers, Investment Levers,** and **Gender** and **Youth** can be considered in food systems activities designed to improve nutrition.



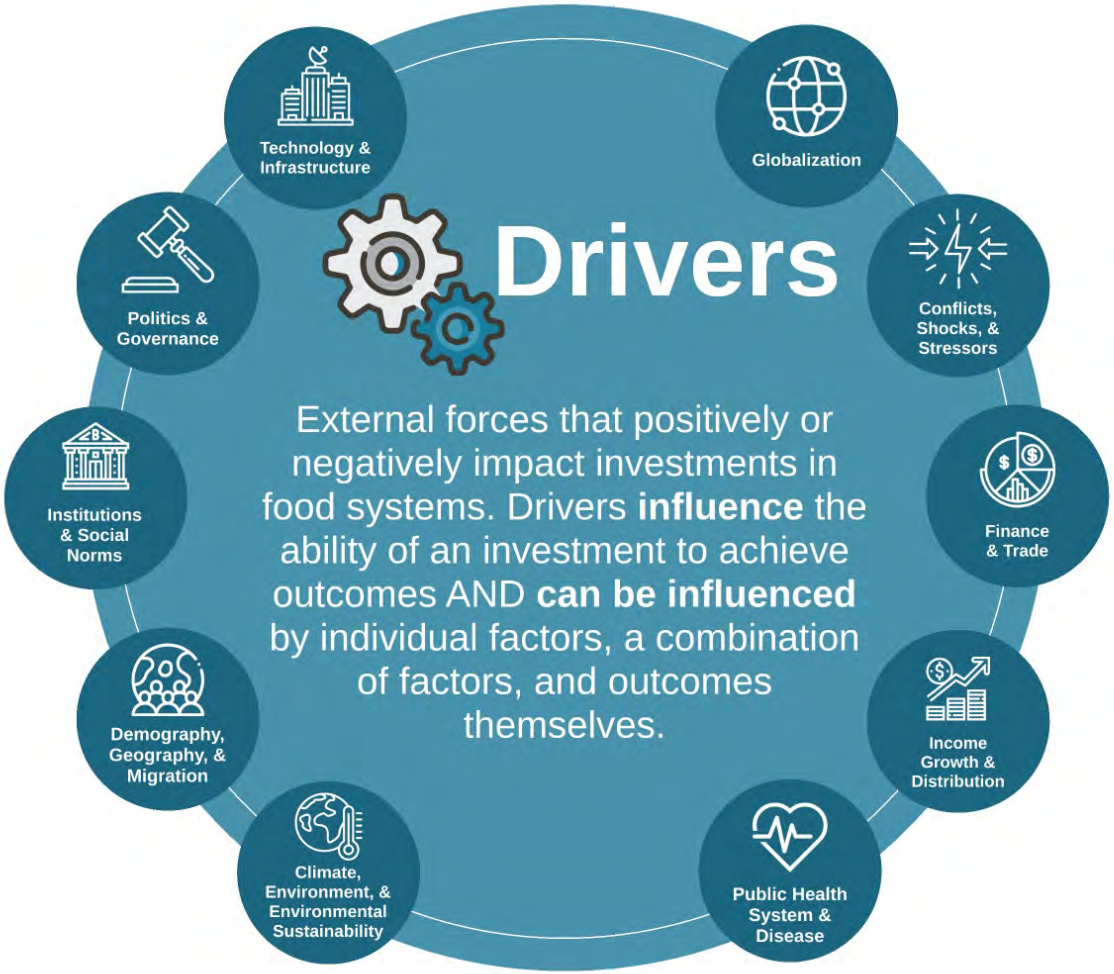
Cross-Cutting Elements

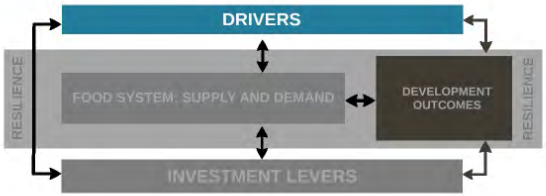
This application of the Framework shows how **Drivers, Investment Levers,** and **Gender** and **Youth** can be considered in food systems activities designed to improve nutrition.

Examples are **nutrition-focused**, though also highlight connections among diets, nutrition, income, health, and the environment within food systems.



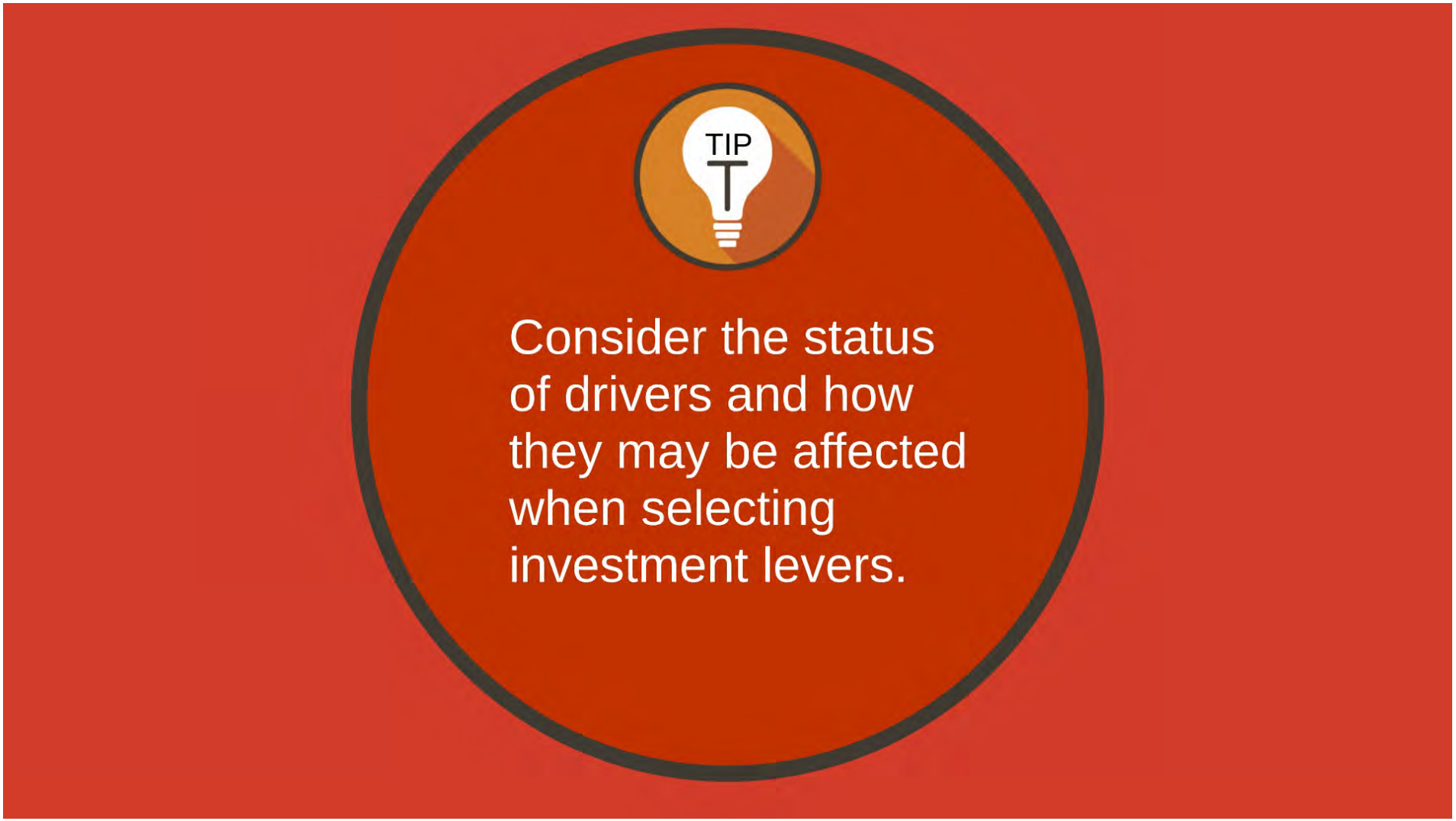
Let's explore!


Drivers
External forces that positively or negatively impact investments in food systems. Drivers **influence** the ability of an investment to achieve outcomes AND **can be influenced** by individual factors, a combination of factors, and outcomes themselves.
Technology & Infrastructure
Globalization
Politics & Governance
Conflicts, Shocks, & Stressors
Institutions & Social Norms
Finance & Trade
Demography, Geography, & Migration
Income Growth & Distribution
Climate, Environment, & Environmental Sustainability
Public Health System & Disease


DRIVERS
RESILIENCE
FOOD SYSTEM: SUPPLY AND DEMAND
DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES
RESILIENCE
INVESTMENT LEVERS

TIP

Glossary


TIP
Consider the status of drivers and how they may be affected when selecting investment levers.

Glossary

Drivers

Climate, Environment, and Environmental Sustainability
- Determinants of food production through biodiversity, agricultural diversity including forest, aquatic, land, and mixed-use agriculture, and food system resilience
- Changes in climate and the environment can impact resilience of ecosystems, producers, households and communities and change water availability and usage. Simultaneously, food systems impact climate and the environment.

Conflicts, Shocks, and Stressors
- Causes of or contributors to acute or prolonged poverty and hunger among individuals, communities, or more broadly
- Climate variability and environmental degradation affect agricultural production cycles, access to water, available productive land, soil degradation, crop pests and diseases, and crop losses.

Demography, Geography, and Migration
- Population growth, changing age distribution and cultural differences, urbanization, and migration and forced displacement that contribute to changes in demand for foods, thus changing production, distribution and marketing, and potential increases in food insecurity and/or unhealthy diets.

Finance and Trade
- Financial resources and trade that can diversify sources of food supply, lower agricultural input costs, and increase purchasing power and favorable prices from imports and exports.

Globalization
- Global linkages that influence food availability and affordability and can impact local producers and traditional foods through trade, information networks, shifting employment opportunities, and a changing focus on exportation rather than domestic food supply

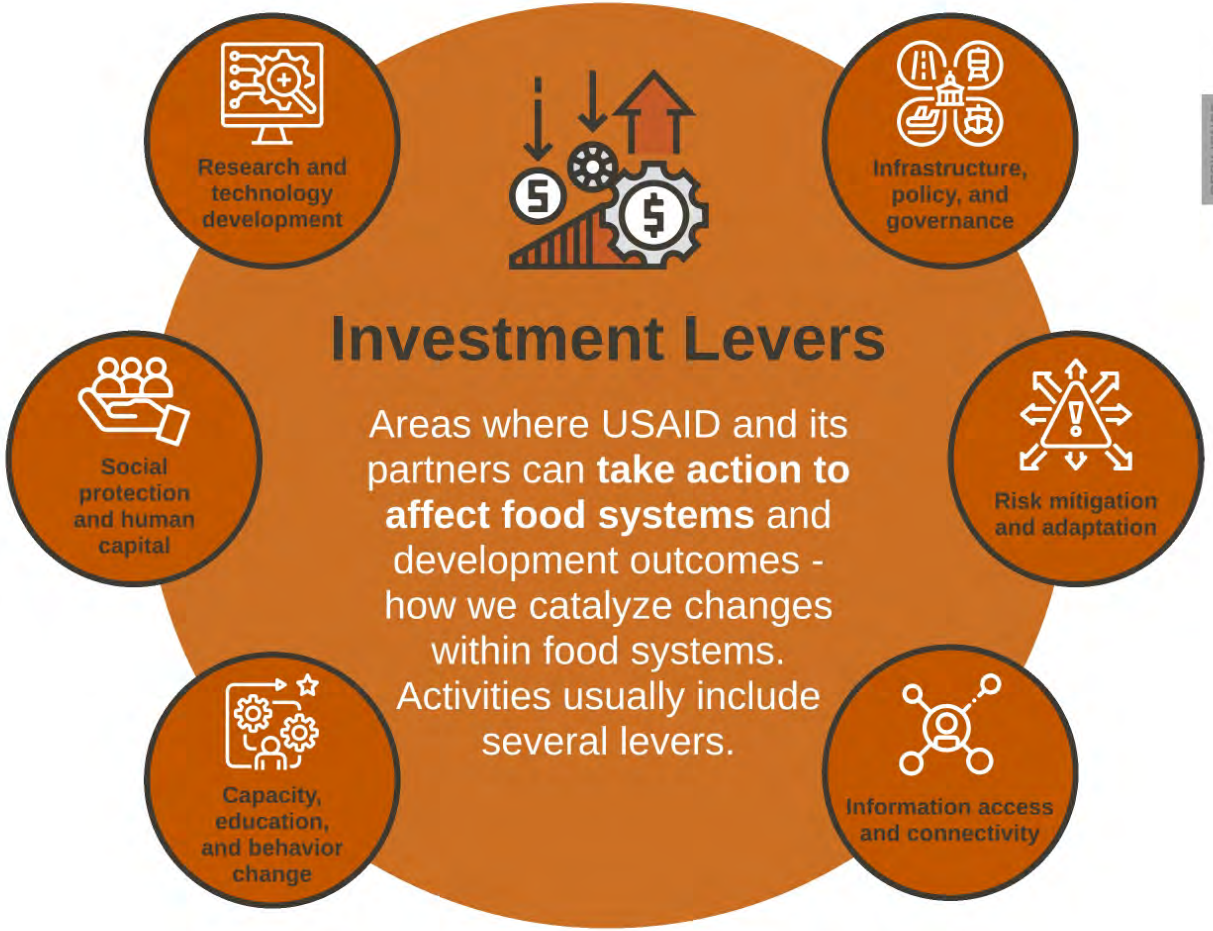
Income Growth and Distribution
- Higher incomes encourage diet diversity and influence diet patterns (both positively and negatively).
- Changes in income may be reflected in shifts towards increased processed and "fast" foods in urban areas among higher income consumers and limited access to healthy foods among vulnerable groups in rural and urban areas.

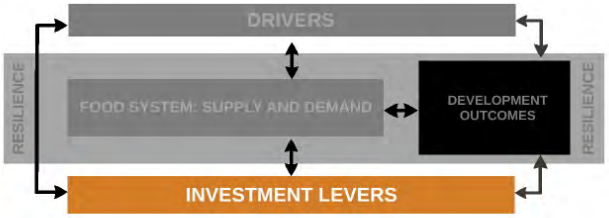
Institutions and Social Norms
- Cultural and social traditions that influence food production, choices, and intra-household decision-making around food production and consumption -Norms also shape public and private sector priorities and engagement in the food system.

Politics and Governance
- Governmental and organizational policies and governance that influence investments, human capital, institutional priorities, and goods and services
- Food safety, labeling and regulatory agencies, standards, guidance, regulations, and monitoring
- Agricultural subsidies, food taxes, and dietary guidelines

Public Health System and Disease
- Systems that prevent and treat communicable and non-communicable diseases, thus impacting human physical, educational, and economic potential.
- Systems can promote healthy diets, discourage unhealthy diets, encourage policy and program linkages between food, nutrition and health actors, and increase participation of civil society and youth engagement.

Technology and Infrastructure
- Technological capacities in agricultural production; livestock and fishery management; food processing and storage; and information, communication, and data management systems
- Infrastructure in markets; transportation between farmers, markets, and consumers; and renewable energy


Research and technology development
Infrastructure, policy, and governance
Investment Levers
Areas where USAID and its partners can take action to affect food systems and development outcomes - how we catalyze changes within food systems. Activities usually include several levers.
Social protection and human capital
Risk mitigation and adaptation
Capacity, education, and behavior change
Information access and connectivity


DRIVERS
RESILIENCE
FOOD SYSTEM: SUPPLY AND DEMAND
DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES
RESILIENCE
INVESTMENT LEVERS

Glossary

Glossary

Investment Levers

Research and Technology Development
- Innovative research and technology that supports the production, marketing, and consumption of crops, livestock, and fish, and reduces food loss, contamination, and spoilage

Infrastructure, Policy, and Governance
- Infrastructure used in food production, transport, sales, and storage; can include physical, transportation, energy, and sanitation infrastructure
- Inclusive policies and systems of governance that aim to improve diets and promote food security and nutrition

Social Protection and Human Capital
- Mechanisms that maintain and improve the ability to produce and procure foods and/or access goods and services, such as school feeding, fresh food vouchers, and cash transfers (conditional or unconditional); may be coupled with nutrition messages.

Risk Mitigation and Adaptation
- Actions that reduce the frequency and lessen the impact of events such as droughts, foods, price shocks, pests, and disease that negatively impact food security and nutrition
- Actions that strengthen the resilience of individuals, households, communities, systems, and governments to anticipate, reduce, mitigate, and manage potential and realized risks

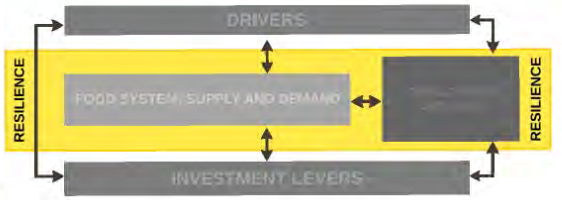
Capacity, Education, and Behavior Change
- Activities that strengthen individual, organization, and community capacities to produce, market, and consume healthy diets
- These include nutrition education and social and behavior change among all food systems actions (e.g., producers, processors, vendors, and consumers).

Information Access and Connectivity
- Means for improving access to information technologies (phones, internet, computers) and increasing use of these technologies to connect food system actors to improve efficiency within the system and information for consumers

Resilience

The ability of people, households, communities, countries, and systems to reduce, mitigate, adapt to, and recover from **shocks and stressors** to food security in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth.

Resilience should not be thought of as a separate sector, but as an **underlying factor** affected by and affecting parts of food systems and, in turn, influencing food system actors, actions, and processes.

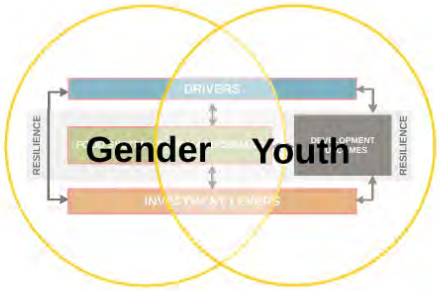


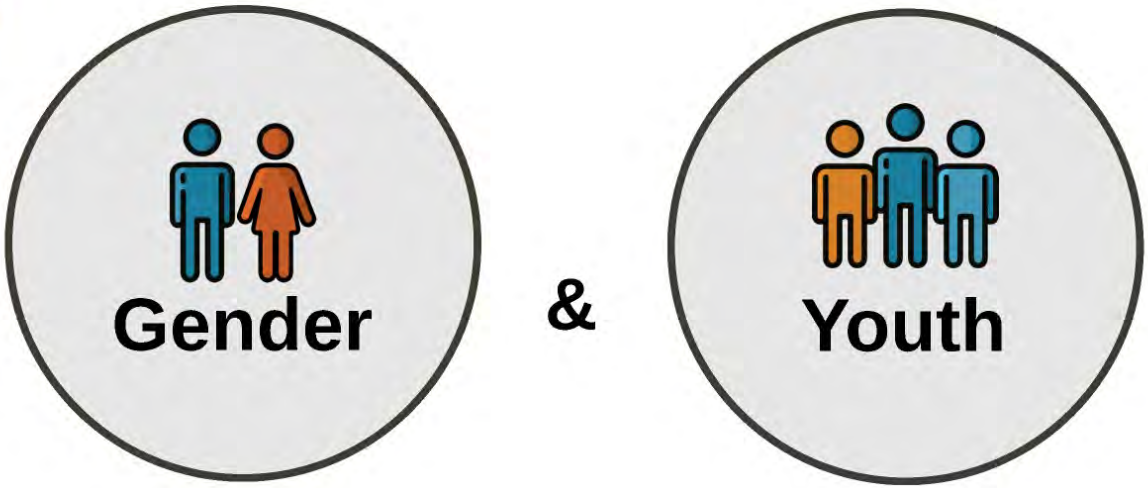
Shock

A short- to medium-term event that has **substantial negative effects** on people's current state of well-being, level of assets, livelihoods, or their ability to withstand future shocks. A shock's onset may be slow or rapid and may affect few or a large number households at the same time.

Stressor

A **longer-term pressure** that undermines current or future vulnerability and well-being, including—but not limited to—climate variability and change, population pressure, and environmental degradation.





Female and youth inclusion in food systems activities refers to both the potential for women and youth to bring about lasting changes and the potential improvement in outcomes for women and youth.

Gender

Gender dynamics **influence food access, availability, and household diets**. Gender transformation can impact food systems through women's:

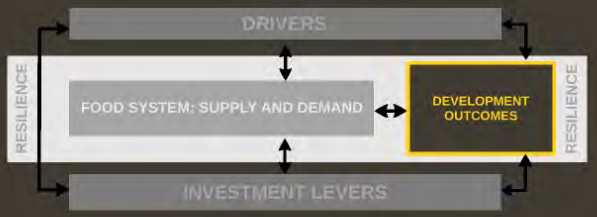
- access to agricultural and nutrition information and technology
- control of household income and education to improve overall household well-being (physical and mental health, nutrition, and literacy)
- access to markets and economic and financial resources
- agency development (skills and self-worth), by shifting gender roles, challenging power relationships, and modifying laws and norms that limit women's choices

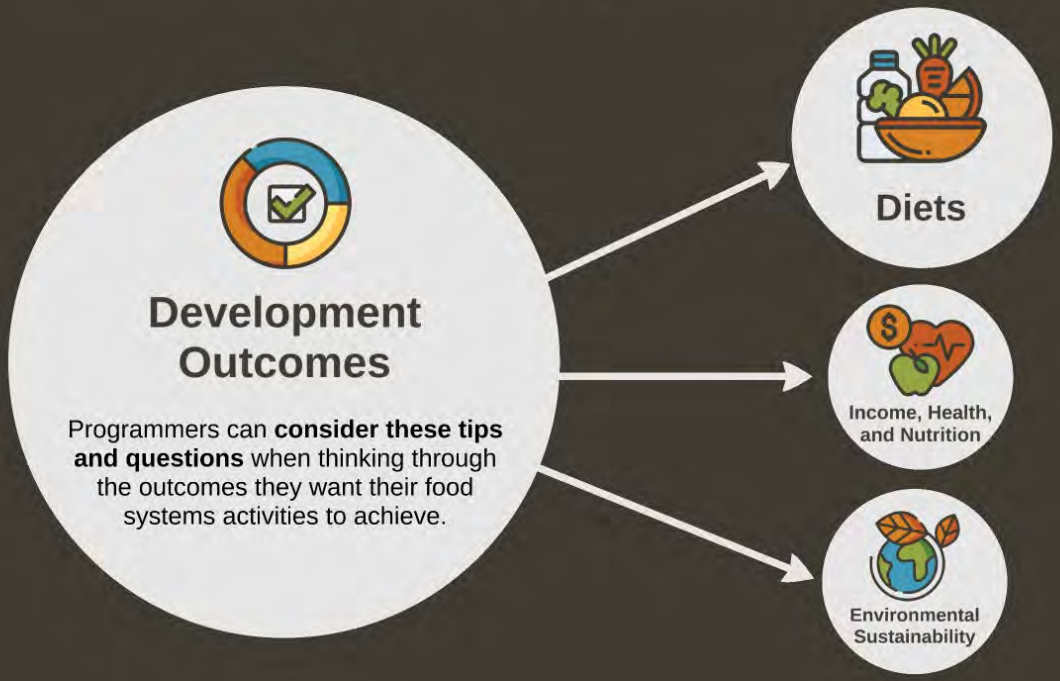
Youth
The energy, potential, and creativity of youth **can be harnessed** in food systems activities such as food production, distribution, and procurement. Youth engagement can impact diets of adolescent girls and their families through:
• economic opportunities
• information
• community engagement to stimulate social changes

TIP
Female and youth participation should be considered when assessing **Drivers** and their associated **Investment Levers**.

What are We Trying to Achieve through Food Systems Actions?

The primary outcome of food systems is diets. Secondary outcomes include income, health and nutrition, and environmental sustainability.





Development Outcomes

Diets

Diets are the primary outcome of food systems investments. Food systems may influence diets to be healthy or unhealthy. We aim to invest in food systems actions **that encourage healthy diets**.

While healthy diets will look different in each context, **all healthy diets will provide**:

- Adequate quantity and quality of foods to achieve optimal growth and development and support functioning and physical, mental, and social well-being and physiological needs
- Safe, diverse, balanced, nutritious foods
- Help with protecting against malnutrition in all its forms and lowering the risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases
- Variability to meet needs depending on an individual's personal characteristics and contexts (e.g., geographical, demographical, cultural)

Outcome Examples

Outcome Examples

- Access to safe foods
- Locally available nutritious foods
- Diet diversity
- Affordable foods
- Overall diet patterns

Development Outcomes

Income, Health, and Nutrition

Diets can also contribute to **income, health, and nutrition**, which in turn affect diets.

- Diets support income generation by contributing to a nourished, productive population.
- The food system is one of the main sectors of employment globally.
- Agriculture-led economic growth is more effective at reducing poverty compared to other sectors.
- Healthy diets are essential for improving health and nutritional status.

Outcome Examples

Outcome Examples

- Increased income generation and purchasing power
- Inclusive economic opportunities in the food system
- Financial stability for resilient livelihoods
- Promotion of healthy, local foods
- Reduction in food-borne illnesses

Development Outcomes

Environmental Sustainability

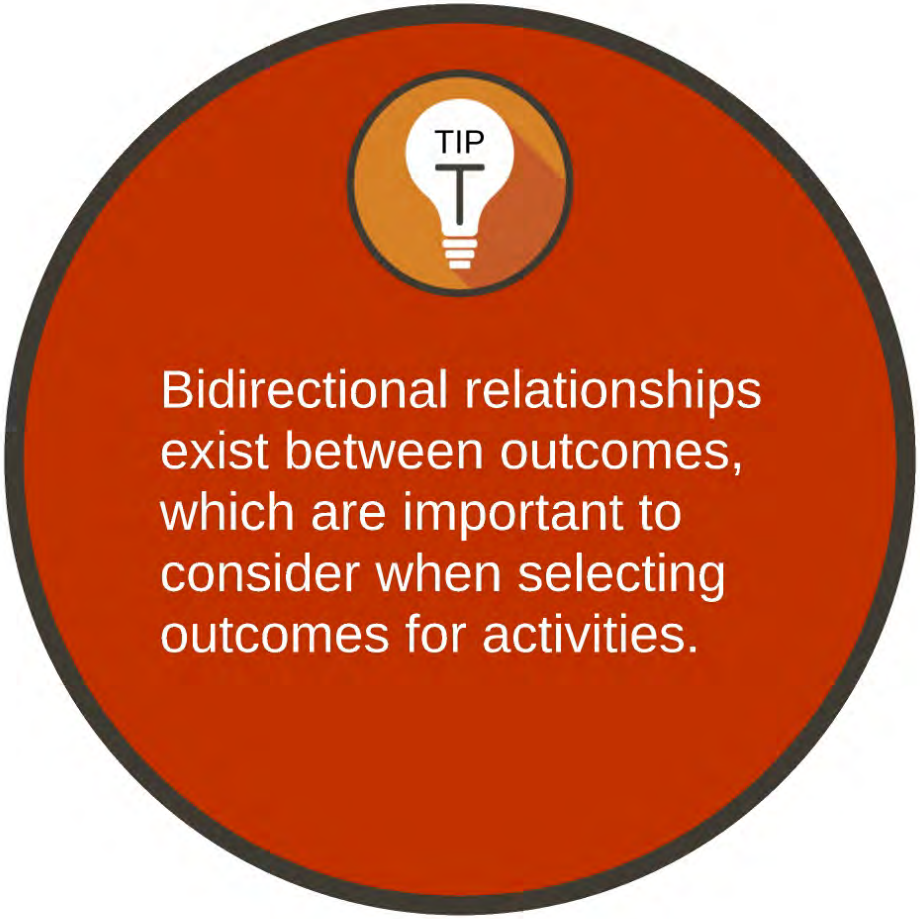
Diets - composed of foods produced using land and water resources - **can impact environmental sustainability**. Environmental conditions can also impact diets.

- Food systems influence water and land use, biodiversity, and climate change.
- Food production has varying environmental impacts.
- Intensive agriculture requires more fertilizer and pesticide use.
- Mono-cropping and cash crop production can lead to biodiversity loss, soil degradation and a food system less resilient to droughts or other extreme weather events.

Outcome Examples

Outcome Examples

- Improved soil quality among crops grown
- Improved biodiversity on and off farms
- Crops grown with reduced agricultural inputs (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.)
- Diversified production models (agroecology)
- Climate-resilient food production
- Improved production efficiency of livestock


TIP
Bidirectional relationships exist between outcomes, which are important to consider when selecting outcomes for activities.

TIP
• A healthy food system can encourage improvements in diets, income, health, nutrition, and the environment.
• Healthy diets fuel a nourished, healthy population and contribute to improved resilience and increased sustainability.

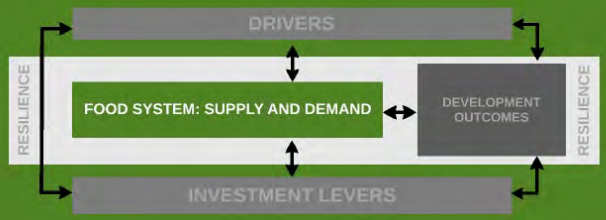
Questions to guide your exploration:

- Does an investment have more than one desired outcome (e.g., ag-led economic growth and improved diets)?
- Are the outcomes balanced?
- Are there any synergies with the desired outcomes?
- Are there potential trade-offs in focusing on one outcome versus another in the current context?

Where Do We Invest in Food Systems?

The Food System: Supply and Demand

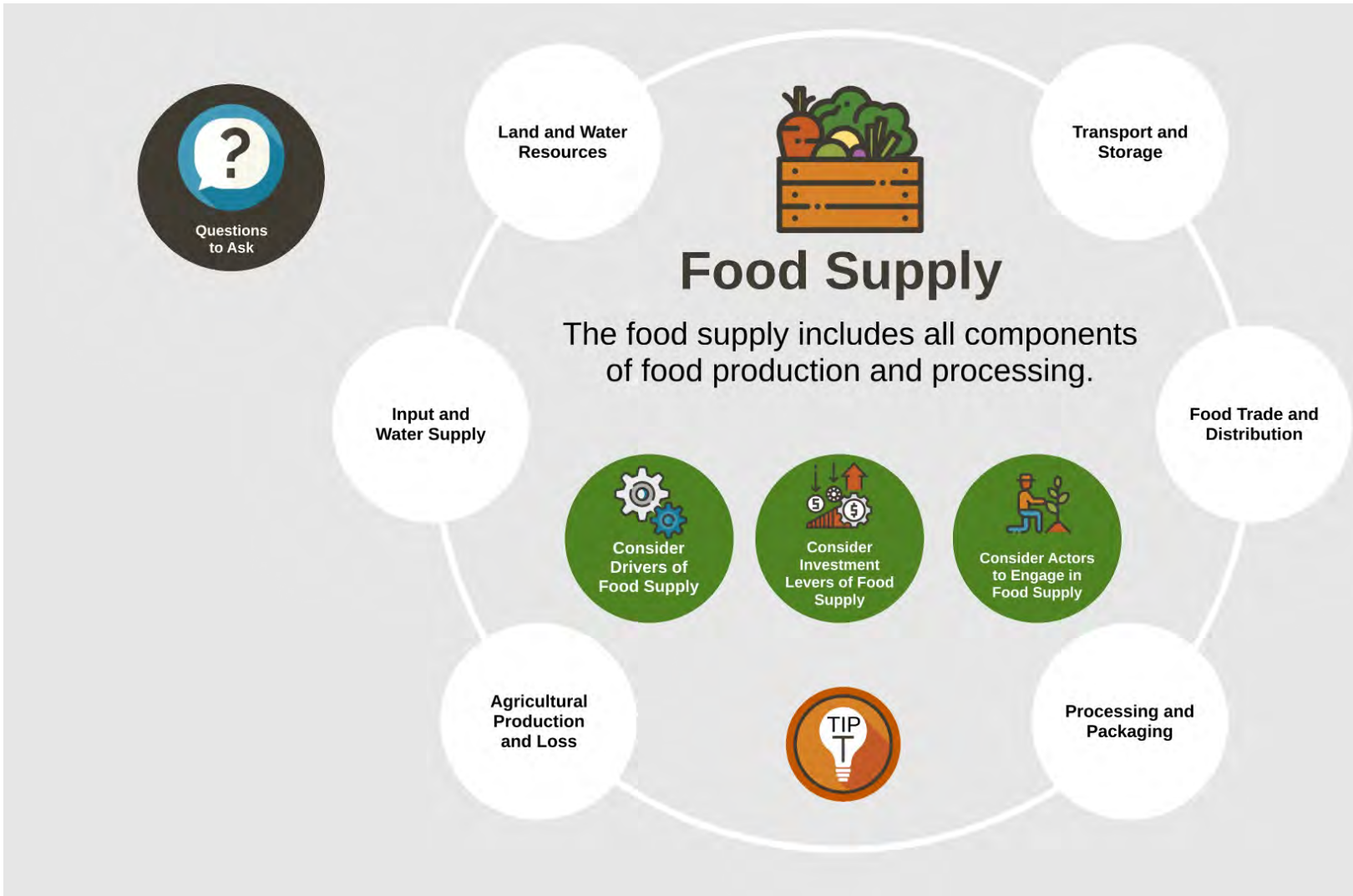
Food Systems are composed of the food supply, food environment, and food and water utilization. We will now explore each of these elements of the Framework to investigate how drivers, investment levers, and actors can be considered when planning food systems investments.



Food Supply

Food Environment

Food and Water Utilization


Questions to Ask
Land and Water Resources
Transport and Storage
Food Supply
The food supply includes all components of food production and processing.
Input and Water Supply
Food Trade and Distribution
Consider Drivers of Food Supply
Consider Investment Levers of Food Supply
Consider Actors to Engage in Food Supply
Agricultural Production and Loss
Processing and Packaging
TIP

Questions to Ask

When considering each component of the Food Supply, ASK:

- Which groups have the potential to contribute to sustainable actions (government, civil society, private sector, research institutions)?
- How might an investment encourage gender-inclusive opportunities for employment, access to finance, and community participation?
- How might an investment impact adolescent nutrition?
- Does an investment encourage a resilient food system?
- How would a resilient food system further improve an investment?

TIP
Use the glossary to review the Drivers and Investment Levers as you think through the food supply.
Glossary

Glossary

Drivers

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Glossary

Investment Levers

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Information Access and Connectivity
- Means for improving access to information technologies (phones, internet, computers) and increasing use of these technologies to connect food system actors to improve efficiency within the system and information for consumers

Consider Drivers of Food Supply

What drivers in the Framework could have positive or negative effects on an investment? How could an investment affect these drivers?

Consider Investment Levers of Food Supply

Which investment lever(s) can help you achieve your desired outcomes?

Consider Actors to Engage in Food Supply

Who can participate to improve the supply of healthy foods?

- Input suppliers
- Farmers
- Transporters
- Processors

Food Supply - Land and Water Resources

Investment Opportunities

maintenance and management of high-quality land, forests, and water (lakes, rivers, oceans) for agriculture (crops, livestock, and aquaculture); rehabilitation of degraded land and water; water resource planning and management

Definition: land and water used to produce food (including livestock and fish), including wild natural resources (forests, rivers, lakes, and oceans)

Food Supply - Input and Water Supply

Definition: inputs required for food production through to packaging, including energy, water/irrigation, seeds, feeds, agri-chemicals, fertilizers, infrastructure, local knowledge, and labor

Investment Opportunities

renewable energy and water technologies; financial and physical access to inputs for crops, livestock, and aquaculture; innovative methods for efficient, affordable irrigation systems; equitable and diverse seed systems

Food Supply - Agricultural Production and Loss

Definition: cultivation and harvest of food products, including food loss from production and harvesting

Investment Opportunities

technologies to increase productivity and nutrient density; post-harvest technologies and connectivity to markets to reduce food loss during harvest; crop, livestock and aquaculture insurance to mitigate risk; farmer access to market information (daily prices, transport costs); digital platforms for real-time agricultural information and guidance

Food Supply - Transport and Storage

Food Supply - Food Trade and Distribution

Food Supply - Processing and Packaging

Definition: methods to render food edible and to preserve food by slowing down or stopping the natural processes of decay, including milling, drying, cooling, freezing, smoking, heating, canning, and fermentation; methods to make food easy to transport and sell in markets

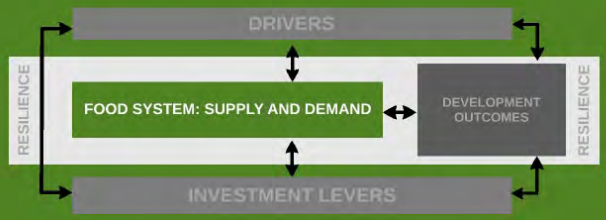
Investment Opportunities

technological and human capacity for processing and packaging methods to retain nutritional value; processing and packaging methods that use renewable energy and materials; research, development, and extension on reducing losses and adding value during processing; innovative packaging that is desirable and convenient for consumers

Where Do We Invest in Food Systems?

The Food System: Supply and Demand

Food Systems are composed of the food supply, food environment, and food and water utilization. We will now explore each of these elements of the Framework to investigate how drivers, investment levers, and actors can be considered when planning food systems investments.



Food Supply

Food Environment

Food and Water Utilization

Questions to Ask

When considering each component of Food Environment, ASK:

- Which groups have the potential to contribute to sustainable actions (government, civil society, private sector, research institutions)?
- How might an investment encourage gender-inclusive opportunities for employment, access to finance, and community participation?
- How might an investment impact adolescent nutrition?
- Does an investment encourage a resilient food system?
- How would a resilient food system further improve an investment?

Questions to Ask
Food Environment
The food environment is the interface that mediates people's food acquisition and consumption within the wider food system. It's where food and consumers come together.
Exchange and Prices
Food and Water Quality and Safety
Consider Drivers of Food Environment
Consider Investment Levers of Food Environment
Consider Actors to Engage in Food Environment
TIP
Availability and Affordability
Promotion, Advertising, and Information
Markets and Access

TIP
Use the glossary to review the Drivers and Investment Levers as you think through the food environment.
Glossary

Glossary

Drivers

Climate, Environment, and Environmental Sustainability
- Determinants of food production through biodiversity, agricultural diversity including forest, aquatic, land, and mixed-use agriculture, and food system resilience
- Changes in climate and the environment can impact resilience of ecosystems, producers, households and communities and change water availability and usage. Simultaneously, food systems impact climate and the environment.

Conflicts, Shocks, and Stressors
- Causes of or contributors to acute or prolonged poverty and hunger among individuals, communities, or more broadly
- Climate variability and environmental degradation affect agricultural production cycles, access to water, available productive land, soil degradation, crop pests and diseases, and crop losses.

Demography, Geography, and Migration
- Population growth, changing age distribution and cultural differences, urbanization, and migration and forced displacement that contribute to changes in demand for foods, thus changing production, distribution and marketing, and potential increases in food insecurity and/or unhealthy diets.

Finance and Trade
- Financial resources and trade that can diversify sources of food supply, lower agricultural input costs, and increase purchasing power and favorable prices from imports and exports.

Globalization
- Global linkages that influence food availability and affordability and can impact local producers and traditional foods through trade, information networks, shifting employment opportunities, and a changing focus on exportation rather than domestic food supply

Income Growth and Distribution
- Higher incomes encourage diet diversity and influence diet patterns (both positively and negatively).
- Changes in income may be reflected in shifts towards increased processed and “fast” foods in urban areas among higher income consumers and limited access to healthy foods among vulnerable groups in rural and urban areas.

Institutions and Social Norms
- Cultural and social traditions that influence food production, choices, and intra-household decision-making around food production and consumption -Norms also shape public and private sector priorities and engagement in the food system.

Politics and Governance
- Governmental and organizational policies and governance that influence investments, human capital, institutional priorities, and goods and services
- Food safety, labeling and regulatory agencies, standards, guidance, regulations, and monitoring
- Agricultural subsidies, food taxes, and dietary guidelines

Public Health System and Disease
- Systems that prevent and treat communicable and non-communicable diseases, thus impacting human physical, educational, and economic potential.
- Systems can promote healthy diets, discourage unhealthy diets, encourage policy and program linkages between food, nutrition and health actors, and increase participation of civil society and youth engagement.

Technology and Infrastructure
- Technological capacities in agricultural production; livestock and fishery management; food processing and storage; and information, communication, and data management systems
- Infrastructure in markets; transportation between farmers, markets, and consumers; and renewable energy

Glossary

Investment Levers

Research and Technology Development
- Innovative research and technology that supports the production, marketing, and consumption of crops, livestock, and fish, and reduces food loss, contamination, and spoilage

Infrastructure, Policy, and Governance
- Infrastructure used in food production, transport, sales, and storage; can include physical, transportation, energy, and sanitation infrastructure
- Inclusive policies and systems of governance that aim to improve diets and promote food security and nutrition

Social Protection and Human Capital
- Mechanisms that maintain and improve the ability to produce and procure foods and/or access goods and services, such as school feeding, fresh food vouchers, and cash transfers (conditional or unconditional); may be coupled with nutrition messages.

Risk Mitigation and Adaptation
- Actions that reduce the frequency and lessen the impact of events such as droughts, foods, price shocks, pests, and disease that negatively impact food security and nutrition
- Actions that strengthen the resilience of individuals, households, communities, systems, and governments to anticipate, reduce, mitigate, and manage potential and realized risks

Capacity, Education, and Behavior Change
- Activities that strengthen individual, organization, and community capacities to produce, market, and consume healthy diets
- These include nutrition education and social and behavior change among all food systems actions (e.g., producers, processors, vendors, and consumers).

Information Access and Connectivity
- Means for improving access to information technologies (phones, internet, computers) and increasing use of these technologies to connect food system actors to improve efficiency within the system and information for consumers

Consider Drivers of Food Environment

What drivers in the Framework could have positive or negative effects on an investment? How could an investment affect these drivers?

Consider Investment Levers of Food Environment

Which investment lever(s) can help you achieve your desired outcomes?

Consider Actors to Engage in Food Environment

Who can participate to improve the food environment for healthy diets?

- Consumers
- Market vendors
- Advertisers
- Public health organizations
- Government

Food Environment - Exchange and Prices

Definition: Food prices, taxes, and subsidies that affect food affordability and influence food purchasing decisions

Investment Opportunities

subsidies or incentives (technical assistance, inputs, etc.) to support nutrient-rich food production; advocacy and support for subsidies that offer healthy foods at lower prices; advocacy for taxes on unhealthy foods

Food Environment - Availability and Affordability

Food Environment - Markets and Access

Food Environment - Promotion, Advertising, and Information

Definition: Product branding, social marketing, labeling, marketing, advertising, and other information dissemination targeted to individuals, communities, or wider audiences

Investment Opportunities

nutrition education and/or skills training for vendors and food outlets, social and behavior change communication methods and messages, point of sale advertising for nutritious foods, cooking demonstrations (affordable recipes) appropriate for traditional methods and local nutritious foods, evidence-based marketing strategies and tools for healthy diets

Food Environment - Food and Water Quality and Safety

Definition: The presence or absence of microbial, physical, or chemical hazards in food or water. High-quality and safe food and water are related to attributes such as freshness and absence of harmful pathogens, additives, chemicals, or any form of adulteration (e.g., dilution, bleaching, or coloring) from the source or applied by the vendor that alters the safety or nutritional value.

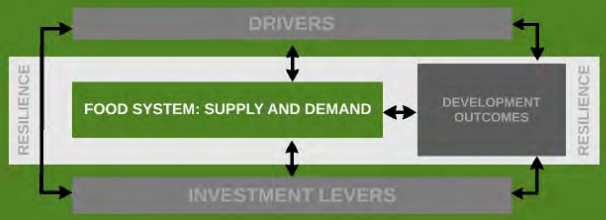
Investment Opportunities

food processing and packaging standards, water infrastructure, food market infrastructure development, food safety and food quality training and education for vendors, water quality training and education for suppliers, food safety regulations and labeling standards, water safety regulations

Where Do We Invest in Food Systems?

The Food System: Supply and Demand

Food Systems are composed of the food supply, food environment, and food and water utilization. We will now explore each of these elements of the Framework to investigate how drivers, investment levers, and actors can be considered when planning food systems investments.



Food Supply

Food Environment

Food and Water Utilization

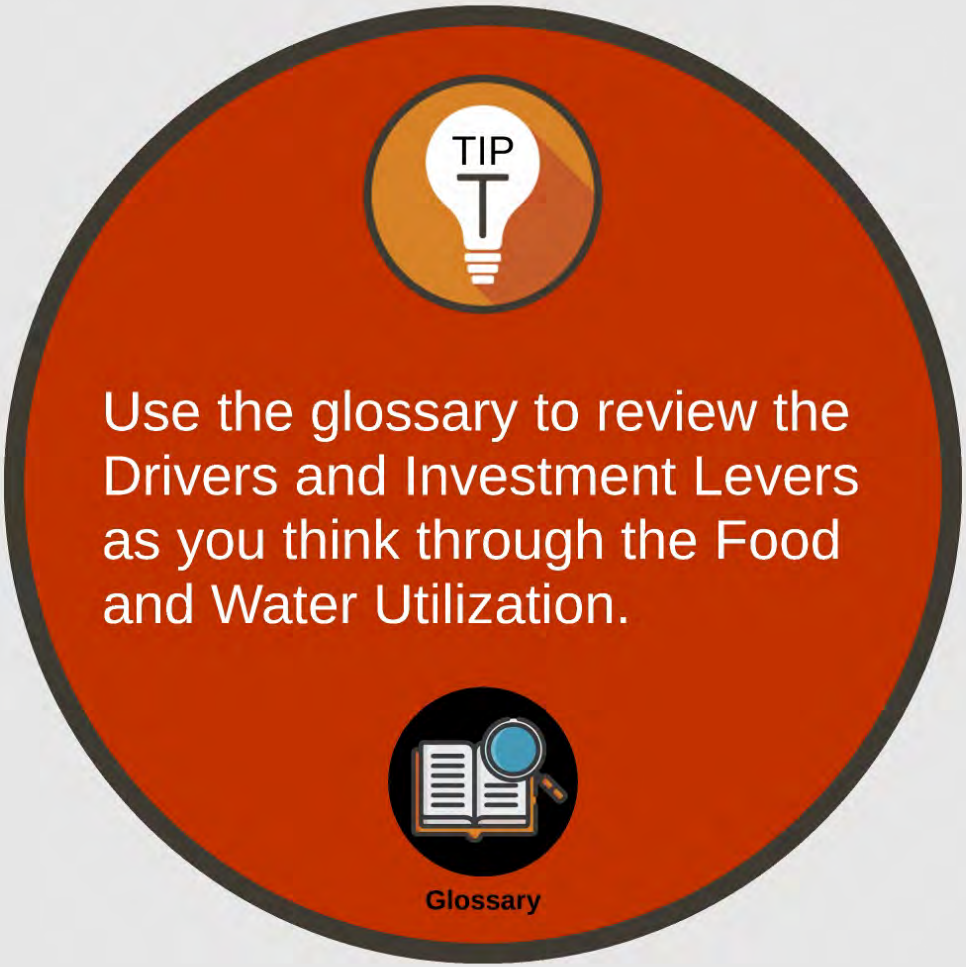
Questions
to Ask

Food and Water Utilization
Food and water utilization is the ability of individuals to make good use of the food and water they acquire and includes a diet providing sufficient energy and essential nutrients, potable water, and adequate sanitation
Purchasing Power
Preparation and Waste
Consider Drivers of Food and Water Utilization
Consider Investment Levers of Food and Water Utilization
Consider Actors to Engage in Food and Water Utilization
TIP
Behavior and Preferences
Hygiene Behaviors
Intra-Household Dynamics and Vulnerabilities

Questions to Ask

When considering each component of the Food and Water Utilization, ASK:

- Which groups have the potential to contribute to sustainable actions (government, civil society, private sector, research institutions)?
- How might an investment encourage gender-inclusive opportunities for employment, access to finance, and community participation?
- How might an investment impact adolescent nutrition?
- Does an investment encourage a resilient food system?
- How would a resilient food system further improve an investment?


TIP
Use the glossary to review the Drivers and Investment Levers as you think through the Food and Water Utilization.
Glossary

Glossary

Drivers

Climate, Environment, and Environmental Sustainability
- Determinants of food production through biodiversity, agricultural diversity including forest, aquatic, land, and mixed-use agriculture, and food system resilience
- Changes in climate and the environment can impact resilience of ecosystems, producers, households and communities and change water availability and usage. Simultaneously, food systems impact climate and the environment.

Conflicts, Shocks, and Stressors
- Causes of or contributors to acute or prolonged poverty and hunger among individuals, communities, or more broadly
- Climate variability and environmental degradation affect agricultural production cycles, access to water, available productive land, soil degradation, crop pests and diseases, and crop losses.

Demography, Geography, and Migration
- Population growth, changing age distribution and cultural differences, urbanization, and migration and forced displacement that contribute to changes in demand for foods, thus changing production, distribution and marketing, and potential increases in food insecurity and/or unhealthy diets.

Finance and Trade
- Financial resources and trade that can diversify sources of food supply, lower agricultural input costs, and increase purchasing power and favorable prices from imports and exports.

Globalization
- Global linkages that influence food availability and affordability and can impact local producers and traditional foods through trade, information networks, shifting employment opportunities, and a changing focus on exportation rather than domestic food supply

Income Growth and Distribution
- Higher incomes encourage diet diversity and influence diet patterns (both positively and negatively).
- Changes in income may be reflected in shifts towards increased processed and "fast" foods in urban areas among higher income consumers and limited access to healthy foods among vulnerable groups in rural and urban areas.

Institutions and Social Norms
- Cultural and social traditions that influence food production, choices, and intra-household decision-making around food production and consumption -Norms also shape public and private sector priorities and engagement in the food system.

Politics and Governance
- Governmental and organizational policies and governance that influence investments, human capital, institutional priorities, and goods and services
- Food safety, labeling and regulatory agencies, standards, guidance, regulations, and monitoring
- Agricultural subsidies, food taxes, and dietary guidelines

Public Health System and Disease
- Systems that prevent and treat communicable and non-communicable diseases, thus impacting human physical, educational, and economic potential.
- Systems can promote healthy diets, discourage unhealthy diets, encourage policy and program linkages between food, nutrition and health actors, and increase participation of civil society and youth engagement.

Technology and Infrastructure
- Technological capacities in agricultural production; livestock and fishery management; food processing and storage; and information, communication, and data management systems
- Infrastructure in markets; transportation between farmers, markets, and consumers; and renewable energy

Glossary

Investment Levers

Research and Technology Development
- Innovative research and technology that supports the production, marketing, and consumption of crops, livestock, and fish, and reduces food loss, contamination, and spoilage

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- Infrastructure used in food production, transport, sales, and storage; can include physical, transportation, energy, and sanitation infrastructure
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- Mechanisms that maintain and improve the ability to produce and procure foods and/or access goods and services, such as school feeding, fresh food vouchers, and cash transfers (conditional or unconditional); may be coupled with nutrition messages.

Risk Mitigation and Adaptation
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Capacity, Education, and Behavior Change
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Information Access and Connectivity
- Means for improving access to information technologies (phones, internet, computers) and increasing use of these technologies to connect food system actors to improve efficiency within the system and information for consumers

Consider Drivers of Food and Water Utilization

What drivers in the Framework could have positive or negative effects on an investment? How could an investment affect these drivers?

Consider Investment Levers of Food and Water Utilization

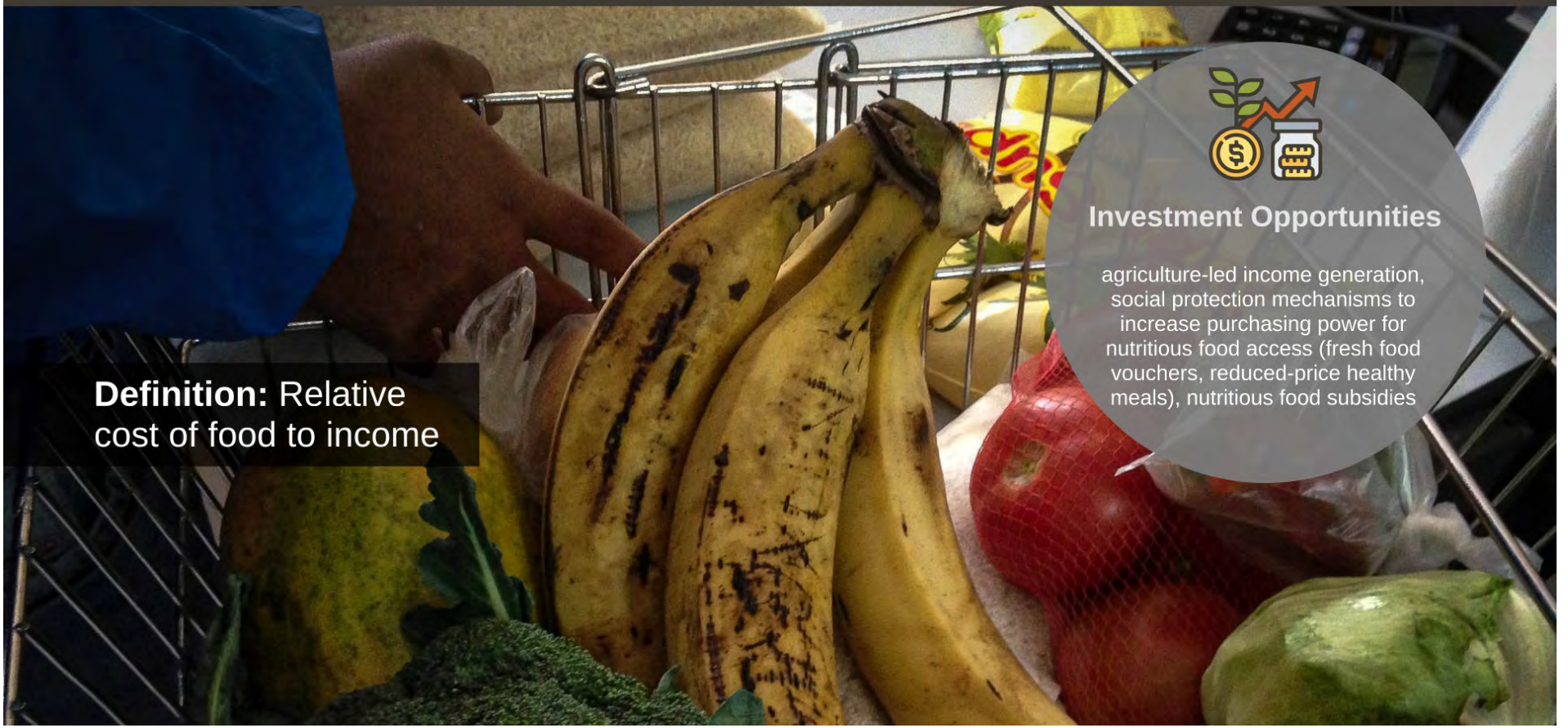
Which investment lever(s) can help you achieve your desired outcomes?

Consider Actors to Engage in Food and Water Utilization

Who can participate to improve food and water utilization?

- Marketing and advertising firms
- Civil society groups
- Community leaders
- Public health organizations
- Food processors
- Consumers

Food and Water Utilization - Purchasing Power



Definition: Relative cost of food to income

Investment Opportunities

agriculture-led income generation, social protection mechanisms to increase purchasing power for nutritious food access (fresh food vouchers, reduced-price healthy meals), nutritious food subsidies

Food and Water Utilization - Behavior and Preferences

Definition: Choices and decisions about what foods to purchase, cook, and consume; influenced by preferences, taste, convenience, values, social norms, traditions, and culture

Investment Opportunities

social and behavior change communication, marketing and promotion of foods or diets, nutrition education including food preparation, evidence-based techniques for influencing consumer demand

Food and Water Utilization - Intra-Household Dynamics and Vulnerabilities

Definition: Household allocation of resources, responsibilities, assets, and decision-making power

Investment Opportunities

economic opportunities for women, women and girl's empowerment, targeted social and behavior change communication for males and heads of households, social change strategies and techniques engaging community leaders and youth

Food and Water Utilization - Preparation and Waste

Definition: Actions performed to prepare and cook food; waste occurs when food is not consumed prior to spoiling

Investment Opportunities

access to clean water, water storage and treatment; innovative water storage techniques; improved food storage; food processing/preservation, including innovative methods such as drying and milling that offer economic opportunities; food waste reduction campaigns; social and behavior change communication

Food and Water Utilization - Hygiene Behaviors

Definition: Practices that reduce contact with pathogens when handling, preparing, or serving food or water; hand washing; separation of animals and household; sanitation

Investment Opportunities

access to clean water through improved water management services; area-wide safe sanitation; education on safe storage, handling, preparation, and serving of food; aspirational and durable products for water and sanitation access and use; evidence-based behavior change strategies

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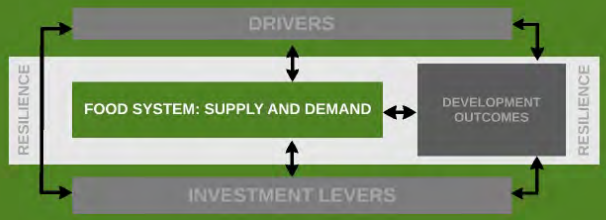

Food Supply

Food Environment

Food and Water Utilization

Putting It All Together

Applying a food systems approach can facilitate greater improvements in diets and–in turn–income, health, nutrition, and the environment. By considering the local contexts in which food systems are integrated, we can invest in ways that maximize our ability to bring about positive changes.

3 Ways to Use the Framework

Remember that the Framework and this guide can help you by—

1. Sparking open conversation with colleagues for more systematic planning across USAID teams

2. Supporting activity design and helping to communicate design across teams to strengthen synergies

3. Helping you gather ideas for adaptations needed during implementation to achieve goals and objectives.

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Additional Resources

Use these resources to continue exploring the Framework.

RFS Food Systems Conceptual Framework: Summary Guidance
This document provides an overview of the Framework and highlights key aspects of RFS programming represented in the Framework.

RFS Framework applications across country contexts
USAID and USAID Advancing Nutrition worked with USAID Missions in Senegal, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Bangladesh to explore applications of the RFS Framework with Mission staff and their implementing partners. Recordings from those engagements provide examples of Missions applying food systems thinking vis-a-vis the RFS Framework to their activities and portfolios.

Senegal engagement:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AxyjFhNKJ51aT4NWkCX5DAHop4dM4IBB/view
https://drive.google.com/file/d/15doU2US97hPJXaN3yl8bWAiQwpHYWcvC/view

Ethiopia engagement:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1raA-V1rLv47Y9v-AfnBe1KvP5Nm0m59P/view
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R-4Gz2WsNHkVtHGnbv0fIJLW1VFhVFRm/view

Nigeria engagement:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/19ubpoGWYnfz59mGplXvdkdGi0APK-6QT/view
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BRIRqStP2esTBjQZuVElCMfqzNHrkQ4u/view

Bangladesh engagement:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m-goOOBaVBjzCb9EedLmQJ1A-FWLMB-T/view
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JxaAKhTwAqRW3QyRLoPYC-6ixoG35ZBj/view

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FEED THE FUTURE

The U.S. Government's Global Hunger & Food Security Initiative

www.feedthefuture.gov

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID ADVANCING NUTRITION

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Web: advancingnutrition.org

USAID Advancing Nutrition is the Agency's flagship multi-sectoral nutrition project, addressing the root causes of malnutrition to save lives and enhance long-term health and development.

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